

# NIFC News

National Interagency Fire Center  
3833 S. Development Ave.  
Boise, ID 83705

<http://www.nifc.gov>



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Contact: Rose Davis (208) 387-5437

## **MILITARY AIRTANKERS ACTIVE IN FIREFIGHTING**

Boise, Idaho...Two military C-130s equipped with the Modular Airborne Firefighting System (MAFFS) are in Albuquerque, New Mexico to support initial attack activity in Texas, Oklahoma and the southwest.

Two aircraft from the 145<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing of the North Carolina Air National Guard from Charlotte, North Carolina will be flying missions out of the airtanker base operated by the Cibola National Forest located at Kirkland Air Force Base. The pilots and aircrews worked firefighting missions in the west last summer, and served in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait and other areas on international assignments in support of Iraq war efforts.

Pre-positioning the aircraft in New Mexico provides initial attack support to Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado. Continuing dry, windy weather patterns and severe drought conditions are exacerbating firefighting efforts in the Texas and Oklahoma area, and a dry winter has increased the fire danger in the southwest as well. The additional aerial firefighting units will supplement the use of civilian heavy and single engine airtankers responding to on-the-ground fire managers' direction.

The C-130s from Air National Guard units are outfitted with a Modular Airborne Firefighting System (MAFFS). The equipment is loaded in the back of the aircraft, and drops 2500 gallons of fire retardant on identified targets using an air-pressurized system.

The MAFFS units are activated in coordination with the United States Northern Command through an agreement with the Department of Defense. The aircraft are used to augment the civilian airtanker fleet currently committed to initial attack assignments. The Air National Guard units with MAFFS capabilities are normally activated for thirty days.

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